

Petit Peony makes fashion history

By Kate Bean
Clipper Writer

When you put all of the political agendas aside, this past weekend's inaugural festivities were much like any celebrity event with an A-list guest list and high-end fashion. "Who was wearing who?" was asked throughout social media, and for Duxbury's own Kate Bowen, the answer to that question included her children's boutique, Petit Peony.

Just after the start of the new year, Bowen was skiing with her husband, Ryan, and children, Kendal, Scarlett and Jack, when she received an email from Petit Peony customer, Ivanka Trump, daughter of President Donald Trump. Having met Trump through a former colleague, Bowen participated in Trump's "Women Who Work" campaign in the fall. Through that connection, Bowen was asked to dress Trump's daughter, Arabella Kushner, during the presidential campaign.

Since she mainly designs soft-cotton, luxury play dresses, Bowen assumed Trump would want more formal attire for the inauguration and so she did not expect to be called upon for such a prestigious event, but she was thrilled to have another opportunity to work with the family again.



Petit Peony owner Kate Bowen with a navy wool coat with velvet collar made for Ivanka Trump's daughter Arabella Kushner.

Photo by Deni Johnson



Ivanka Trump and daughter Arabella, who is wearing an ivory wool coat designed by Duxbury resident Kate Bowen. Photo by the Daily Mail

"As a designer, I was incredibly honored and excited to be given the opportunity to create clothing for the first family of this country," said Bowen, who has an office in Snug Harbor. "It was a chance to really challenge myself with design, and deadlines, and produce a really beautiful product."

Starting with a few inspiration photos and color scheme from Trump, Bowen went to work. Dealing with new fabrics like wool and velvet and with only three weeks to deliver, Bowen needed help. As she is self-taught in sewing, Bowen first needed to find an experienced seamstress who could help bring her designs to life. Through the help of several local

seamstresses, Bowen was directed to the Good Clothing Company, which took on the job despite such tight deadlines.

Bowen worked tirelessly and was able to source all of her materials and production within the US. Once the designs were completed, she worked directly with Trump and her children to ensure style and fit.

“They invited me into their home, and I got to spend a lot of time with the children,” said Bowen. “They were all very easy going and really appreciated the designs.”

Bowen’s designs were featured at two out of the three inaugural events. Arabella wore a Petit Peony navy wool coat and velvet collar with matching dress to the Arlington National Cemetery ceremony on Thursday, and she wore an ivory wool coat with a coordinating dress to the prayer service on Saturday. Additionally, Trump’s sons, Joseph and Theodore, wore matching rompers underneath matching charcoal wool overcoats with velvet collars designed by Bowen to Saturday’s prayer service.

Bowen said politics was not a factor for her when she agreed to take the job.

“This really was not a political play for me,” she said of this lucky break. “This was more an opportunity to design a collection for a momentous occasion in history.”

Being only one of a handful of designers selected to dress the first family, Bowen was even more excited to have Petit Peony sit among other notable designers, including famous American designer Oscar de la Renta. That, alongside Ivanka Trump being well-known for her personal fashion, was a huge stepping stone for the Duxbury designer.

“It’s really hard to grow a brand and grow a business, so when you get the opportunity to work with someone who is a fashion symbol herself and has made a business out of empowering women, you take it,” said Bowen.

Since Petit Peony’s inaugural debut, the brand has seen a surge in online sales. Bowen is also offering custom orders for her inaugural line and expects it to sell out.